

NS-US035094

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

Masaki WATANABE et al.

Serial No. 10/648,251

Filed: August 27, 2003

For: MAP IMAGE DISPLAY DEVICE

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Attn.: BOX ISSUE FEE
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Patent Art Unit: 2612
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Examiner Son M. Tang
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Allowed: May 18, 2006
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COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE
UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.104(e)

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
 Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Tang for the Notice of Allowability and the thorough examination of the present application. However, Applicants believe that the Statement of Reasons for Allowance is limited to independent claims 1, 4 and 15, and is not commensurate with the scope of independent claims 19-21. Thus, Applicants wish to make the following comments of record.

Specifically, the Statement of Reasons for Allowance mistakenly states "[e]ach independent claim identifies the uniquely distinct features of a control unit operatively coupled to the display unit to display a current display map image with at least one user selectable distant map name on the display unit in a peripheral part of the display unit that corresponds to a relative direction of the distant location relative to a center point of the current displayed map image". Applicants agree with the Examiner that that prior art fails to disclose or suggest the unique arrangements as asserted by the Examiner. However, Applicants would like to point out that the control unit is required only in independent claims 1, 4 and 15, and not in independent claims 19-21.

More specifically, independent claim 19 is written in "means-plus-function" language for describing the map image display device, i.e., the input means, the display means and the control means. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the scope of a means-plus-function limitation is to be interpreted in accordance with 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph. In particular, all the means recited in claim 19 "shall be construed to cover the corresponding

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structure, materials, or acts described in the specification and *equivalents* thereof" (emphasis added). See, 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph. Thus, independent claim 19 should be construed to cover the specific structure of the map image display device disclosed in the specification and *equivalents* thereof.

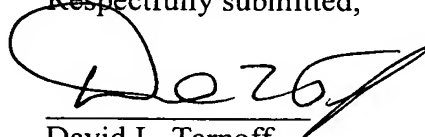
Moreover, independent claim 20 is directed to a map image display program, and this claim does not specifically require the control unit as stated in the Statement of Reasons for Allowance.

Furthermore, independent claim 21 is directed to a method for displaying map images, and this claim does not specifically require the control unit as stated in the Statement of Reasons for Allowance.

In any event, Applicants believe the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest the map image display device recited in independent claim 19, the map image display program as recited in independent claim 20, or the method for displaying map images as recited in independent claim 21.

Thus, the Statement of Reasons for Allowance may lead to a possible misinterpretation of independent claims 19-21 of the present application. Accordingly, since the Statement for Reasons of Allowance is limited to independent claims 1, 4 and 15 and not commensurate with the scope of independent claims 19-21, Applicants respectfully object to the Statement for Reasons of Allowance. Entry of these comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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